

Let's Talk About The Stupid, Jerkface Language Of Divorce

[BY CHRISTY WILLIAMS](#)

I'm struggling with the words that go along with divorce.

In fact, I don't think I've even said the word divorce out loud. I've only written it. I just doesn't feel right to me – it doesn't feel like it describes us or our family's situation.

We didn't even want to use it when we told our kids, and I didn't use it when I told my side of the family. I think I mostly say that we are splitting up. But why? Why does it bother me so much?

For the most part, I think it's because of the negative connotations that go along with it. There aren't a lot of amicable divorces around – or maybe we just don't hear about them or see them. And I get it. There's a lot of hurt involved. It's hard to get past the anger and sadness and disappointment that comes with ending a marriage.

And for our kids, we really didn't want to use the word because they might have extreme examples in their heads from televisions shows, books, movies – or from their friends' divorced parents who are struggling to even be in the same room together or have a civil conversation.

So “splitting up” has been my go-to euphemism. Author Glennon Doyle has written that her kids call her divorce

from their father, “the plot twist” – which she kinda loved since she’s a writer. Me too.

But I think the first time I even realized that a divorce could not only be amicable, but actually a loving and conscious process, was when Gwyneth Paltrow and Chris Martin jointly announced their “conscious uncoupling.” A lot of people ridiculed them and mocked them for using that phrase – but I didn’t. I got it. I totally understood.

It opened my eyes to a new way of looking at something that had historically been considered devastating and tragic – and turned it into another opportunity for growth in our journey together as a family. That’s not to say that there hasn’t been hurt or anger or sadness for us – only that we are trying to consciously put that aside as we navigate this transition in the most loving way possible. For our kids and for us. I *still* love the idea of “conscious uncoupling.”

I also get my feathers ruffled when I hear someone refer to anyone’s “failed marriage.” If someone wants to say that about their own marriage, that’s their prerogative – but I swear if anyone says that about mine, I might actually throat-punch them.

Because what does that even mean? We were married for 25 years...but because we weren’t married for 30 or 50 years, it’s a failed marriage? It’s such bunk.

Personally, I believe in soul contracts, and I believe that as a couple, we came together to learn certain lessons and be together for a certain amount of time, and create the children we created. I have no doubt that our children were supposed to come into this world. And the life that we had together for 25 years is anything but a failure.

We ended our marriage. We completed our marriage. But our marriage did not fail.

The other thing I'm struggling with is what to call each other. I really have no ideas on what to do for this one. Most people say "my ex" and I get it. It's short and easy and...I still just hate the negative connotation. Somewhere, I heard someone use the term "wasband," and it made me chuckle. But since it rhymes with husband, I think it would be even more confusing for people – and I'd have to explain it all the time. I love blended families who call new spouses "bonus mom" or "bonus dad." I wish there was something like that I could use.

Most of the time, I still just use his name when I'm referring to him. But for people who don't know him, it feels weird to say, "my co-parent" or "my kids' dad." I'm still exploring this one and would be happy to hear any suggestions you might have.

I know a lot of people don't care about trivial stuff like this – especially when there are so many big things to worry about when ending a marriage.

Maybe it's because I'm a writer and words matter to me. Maybe I just want to help elevate the way we think about marriages ending.

Or maybe...I just think we all deserve better.

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